

# IAWG Thailand Country Field Study

## Executive Summary

A five-member team representing the Interagency Working Group on United States Government-Sponsored International Exchanges and Training (IAWG) conducted a country field study in Bangkok, Thailand, the week of May 22-26, 2000. The team included representatives from the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the IAWG staff.

The IAWG selected Thailand primarily for three reasons: the country has historical importance as a regional crossroads, the U.S. Mission in Bangkok serves as headquarters for many U.S. Government (USG) exchange and training programs in Southeast Asia, and many bilateral USG exchange and training programs are sponsored in Thailand.

The IAWG team report focuses on the following elements set forth by the IAWG mandate:

- **Verification of Fiscal Years 1998 and 1999 Inventories of USG Programs:** Embassy staff corroborated much of the data gathered in Washington. They acknowledged, however, that they were unaware of some of the reported activities. These discrepancies fell primarily into three categories: programs conducted by agencies without a field presence, ad-hoc exchange activities, and activities that were part of a larger exchange program.
- **Interagency Coordination and Cooperation:** The Ambassador and his staff expressed a keen interest in exchanges and training, and see them as an essential component of the Embassy's public diplomacy activities. There was excellent engagement and coordination at every level in the Embassy. Because of the diverse nature of the U.S. Government presence in Bangkok, no central mechanism exists to coordinate the numerous exchanges and training activities. However, several specialized mechanisms foster information-sharing among Embassy staff.
- **Best Practices:** A number of existing practices were singled out for special recognition as "best practices." The Fulbright board and staff in Thailand stand out for their excellence among many other Missions. The Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group was noted for its many formal coordination mechanisms with counterparts and superiors. The International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok demonstrates how USG programs can reach out multilaterally to train third-country participants from nations where they would be otherwise excluded. A model of USG-private partnership is found at the Adolescent Drug Rehabilitation Center in Nakhon Pathom, outside of Bangkok. Finally, the team saw potential benefit in USG exchange and training programs' solicitation of

host-country financial input, not as a cost-saving measure, but as a means to increase effectiveness.

- **Performance Measurement:** Performance measurement of international exchanges and training programs at the field level faces many challenges. Some agencies are more advanced than others in this area. Like their counterparts at other Missions and government-wide, interviewees expressed a wide range of opinions about the practicality of performance measurement. Some interviewees expressed a sense that performance measurement as defined by the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) might place too much of a burden on current staffing levels in the field. Additionally, transient ad hoc activities, which are prolific at many large Missions like Bangkok, do not readily lend themselves to structured data collection and performance analysis.
- **Host Country Input Into Exchanges and Training Programs:** The activities conducted by USG agencies in Thailand, whether in the areas of education, health, law enforcement or defense, are rooted in a strong relationship with Thailand. A high degree of host country “partnerships” and “buy-in” emerged as key factors in enhancing the conduct and effectiveness of the exchanges and training programs. Thailand and the United States generally agree on the priority areas for exchanges and training activities. The host country intensely and directly participates in the recruitment process. In many cases, the host country chooses the participants, subject to USG approval.
- **Private Sector Initiatives:** The severe 1997 economic recession in Thailand dramatically hindered the private sector’s ability to provide significant financial support for exchanges and training activities. The lack of financial support does not signify disinterest on the part of the Thai private sector. Many Embassy sections enjoy healthy, productive relationships with private sector organizations that are not linked solely to funding.
- **Increasing Efficiency and Decreasing Costs:** Advanced distributed learning (also known as distance learning) was explored as a means to decrease cost outlays for international exchanges and training with some positive reactions. Others at Mission pointed out that such methods could not, and should not, take the place of direct people-to-people contacts, an irreplaceable benefit of many exchange programs. A balanced approach to distance learning is required. The team felt that greater efficiencies in programs could result if performance measurement practices were filtered down to the field level.

## Overview

As part of its continuing effort to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and coordination of USG-sponsored international exchanges and training activities, the IAWG began conducting country studies to report on international exchanges and training from a field

perspective in 1999. Heretofore, the IAWG has relied on agencies' Washington headquarters to provide data for its *Annual Report*. Identifying administrative and programmatic best practices used in the field, which can be emulated in Washington, is a major step in the IAWG's fulfillment of its mission.

The IAWG received approval from Mission staff to conduct the Bangkok field study tour during the week of May 22-26, 2000. The Public Affairs Section of the Embassy arranged appointments for the team.

The American Embassy in Bangkok is one of the largest embassies in the world, with over 35 U.S. Government agencies represented there. Many of the agency offices have regional responsibilities in addition to their activities in Thailand. The types of international exchanges and training activities there vary widely, with most activities focused primarily on the fields of education, health, law enforcement, and defense. The team met with more than 25 agencies located at the Embassy and with several private partner organizations in Bangkok.

The IAWG field study team addressed seven goals in conducting its study. The findings, as they relate to these goals, appear below.

### **Goal I: Verify the FY 1998 and 1999 Inventories of Exchanges and Training Programs**

Before arriving in Bangkok, the IAWG team sent the Mission a draft of the IAWG FY 1999 inventory of exchanges and training programs. The Mission distributed the data among the more than 35 USG agencies represented in Thailand for verification. Although the Mission staff verified most of the Washington data, it was unaware of some of the reported activities. Discrepancies were more frequently observed among agencies without a field presence or among ad hoc exchange activities.

One of the most vexing issues for Mission staff was the lack of a clear definition of international exchanges and training programs. Mission representatives used various and sometimes conflicting definitions of what constituted reportable exchanges and training. This is a microcosm of what occurs in the Washington-based headquarters of the various agencies. The IAWG's original guidance (based in part on Executive Order 13055, which created the IAWG) that exchanges and training activities include only those participants who have "crossed borders" is inadequate. It fails to encompass the breadth and scope of programs sponsored by the U.S. Government in collaboration with the host government, private sector, and other entities. Capturing accurate data on the training and exchange communities worldwide has been and remains a major challenge. It cannot be solved at the field level.

The IAWG encouraged USG organizations to provide data on previously excluded categories of programs in their FY 1999 inventory submissions: in-country training, third-country training, train-the-trainer programs, and technology-based training such as

advanced distributed learning. While not all organizations submitted this type of information, the team verified numerous examples of diverse exchanges and training that are worth capturing. Resolving this definitional issue, to include developing and coordinating appropriate policy about the collection and reporting of data, should be a top priority for the IAWG for the immediate future.

The IAWG team found various levels of recordkeeping among the USG agencies. Programs that featured exchanges as the essence of their activity generally maintained accurate records. In some cases, alumni associations and organizations such as the Fulbright Commission also keep track of participants. Agencies involved in the direct handling of training facilities, trainee selection, and actual training, also generally had accurate records.

However, agencies involved in exchanges and training incidental to their primary mission generally did not have complete data about their involvement in these exchanges and training activities, even though they were able to respond to specific inquiries. Part of the problem is the lack of policy about reporting responsibility. For example, some programs are funded by an umbrella agency, like the State Department's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) Bureau, but executed by another USG agency. It is unclear who bears the primary responsibility for recordkeeping: the agency that funds or the agency that executes. Therefore in addition to the issue of what data to collect, there is the issue of what organization has responsibility for collecting and reporting data. This issue also requires IAWG action.

## **Goal II: Interagency Coordination and Cooperation**

Overall, there is good cooperation and coordination of international exchanges and training within the Embassy in Bangkok. Because the U.S. Government presence in Bangkok is so diverse, there is no central apparatus specifically designed to coordinate *all* types of exchanges and training. But many coordination mechanisms do exist for broad categories of exchanges and training:

- **Country Team Meeting:** This weekly meeting, chaired by the Ambassador, brings together representatives from all sections of the Embassy. The purpose is to raise awareness of issues of which the Ambassador and other sections of the Embassy should be aware, including exchanges and training activities.
- **Directors' Briefing:** During this daily briefing for the Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), principal Directors provide information on "hot button" issues requiring immediate attention or action from the Embassy.
- **Exchange Database:** The Public Affairs Section maintains a database of Thai nationals who have participated in exchanges to the United States. Data are collected from all sections of the Embassy to cover the full range of exchanges.

The data collected and reported from the database have great value, but are more limited in scope than the data collected by the IAWG.

- **International Visitor Program (IVP):** The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) works with six or seven Embassy sections on a regular basis in soliciting nominations for the State Department's International Visitors Program. The Legal Attaché, Narcotics Affairs, Economic, and Political sections, among others, have participated in the process. Lists of the participants are widely circulated by the PAO on a monthly basis. As more sections realize the benefits of the IVP, there will likely be more demand for this program.
- **Foreign Anti-Narcotics Community (FANC):** This is a multinational group comprised of law enforcement agencies and other interested organizations associated with counternarcotics issues. Nations represented in this group include the United States, Australia, Britain, Japan, and Israel. Officials from the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) -- and other organizations concerned with the problems of drug production, trafficking, and addiction -- also participate. Among the key issues discussed by this group are exchanges and training, especially as they relate to avoiding duplication of effort among the multinational community.
- **Law Enforcement Team:** This mechanism is especially effective. Chaired by the Ambassador, this team includes representatives from all U.S. law enforcement entities at the Mission, including the Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation/Legal Attaché (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the U.S. Customs Service (USCS), and the U.S. Secret Service (USSS).
- **Counternarcotics Team:** The DCM chairs this subset of the Law Enforcement Team, which includes representatives from law enforcement entities that handle counternarcotics issues; e.g., NAS, DEA, USCS, FBI.

### Goal III: Best Practices

The IAWG mandate requires that administrative and programmatic best practices be identified. The Thailand IAWG study team believes the following are excellent examples of practices that could be emulated by other Missions:

- **Thailand-U.S. Educational Foundation (TUSEF):** The binational Fulbright foundation, affiliated with the Fulbright Scholarship program, is particularly effective with a strong board, qualified and effective commission staff, and supportive staff at the Embassy (including the Ambassador, DCM, and PAO), as well as officials of the Thai Government. Of particular significance is the fact that the in-country leadership has been successful in obtaining tuition assistance for virtually every Thai Fulbright Scholar and securing private support to reduce

overall program costs. Although intangible, the commitment to coordination, excellence, and the inherent value of the Fulbright exchange program cannot be underestimated as a contributing factor to the program's success and great prestige in Thailand.

- **Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG):** Training and exchanges sponsored by JUSMAG Thailand exceed all other Mission-sponsored training and exchanges in both dollars and participants. In 1999, JUSMAG sponsored almost 900 participants in Foreign Military Sales-related training and another 200 International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program participants. Big numbers alone did not make this an effective activity -- rather, it was the formalized coordination structure in place. JUSMAG sponsors monthly meetings with the Thai military services at the liaison officer level and annually holds meetings at the senior officer level to ensure that country team efforts reflect the desires of the host nation. In addition, JUSMAG conducts a formal coordination between the Embassy's Mission Performance Plan and the regional Commander in Chief's (CINC) Theater Engagement Plan (TEP) to ensure common sense linkages between training provided to the Thai military and U.S. goals for the region.
- **Host Nation Financial Participation as an Indicator of Commitment:** The Agricultural Counselor illustrated this concept best. He observed that the most effective exchanges were those where the Thais made a financial commitment to the relationship. He explained that the more the Thais had invested, the better the program seemed to be. Other interviewees pointed out that the corollary was true; where less Thai financial investment was present, there was less evidence of implementing the training they received. The lesson seems clear: more host country commitment equals better training.
- **Thailand Peace Corps Operations:** The Peace Corps has a relatively small program in Thailand, but is a significant player in helping the nation to improve its quality of life through the upgrading of teacher skills, as legislated in Thailand's 1999 Education Act. With its 60-plus in-country Volunteers principally focused on the promotion of student-centered teacher development, the Peace Corps represents the largest contingent assisting the Thai Government's overhaul of education. Interestingly, Peace Corps has sought and received financial support from other Embassies (e.g., England, Korea, New Zealand, Canada, Sweden, and Australia) for Volunteer and community secondary projects identified by the communities in which Volunteers work. However, the magnitude of the challenge dwarfs available resources.
- **Adolescent Drug Rehabilitation Program, Nakhon Pathom:** Under the supervision of its Supreme Court for Juvenile Justice, Thailand operates a drug rehabilitation center in Nakhon Pathom, a short distance from Bangkok. A cadre of leaders, all of whom received training at DAYTOP International in New York with funding provided through State's INL Bureau, staffs the center. This

program is exemplary. Aside from initial U.S.-provided training, the Thai Government and private sector fund and operate the program. Yet, to a person, the staff credited the training provided by the United States as the foundation for the program's success.

- **International Law Enforcement Academy, Bangkok:** Created in early 1999, this academy appears to be already paying dividends. It focuses on providing law enforcement training in a multilateral context. As such, it offers a venue for law enforcement officers from throughout the region to receive up-to-date, standardized training and, perhaps more importantly, to develop long-term contacts.

#### **Goal IV: Performance Measurement in U.S.-Thai Exchange and Training Programs**

The IAWG is required to assess the degree of performance measurement in international exchanges and training programs and to identify any common measurements across programs. IAWG country studies offer an opportunity to see the 1993 Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) in action with U.S. Government-sponsored international exchanges and training programs.

The team found little evidence of *formal* performance measurement of programs by agency field representatives in Thailand, but found a strong sense among Embassy staff that there are many positive results to international exchanges and training programs. However, like Washington headquarters and many Missions worldwide, there is little understanding of formal performance measurement as a concept and discipline. The country team offered a wide range of views about performance measurement. The study team's findings are summarized below:

- Respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the value of exchanges and training and the ways they contribute to larger goals and objectives. Anecdotal, qualitative results were offered as performance measures, even though proving them using quantitative measures might be difficult.
- Analysis of performance measures is frequently performed at agency headquarters, not in the field. The team found that most interviewees collected a lot of data about their programs, but those data were used for various local purposes, not assessment of performance at a macro level.
- Some interviewees expressed skepticism that their programs could be measured. They generally expressed the view that it is impractical to track program outputs/outcomes because they are either too long-term or too intangible to quantify. Agency representatives sometimes expressed that it is impossible to correlate the program as a direct cause for those outcomes. This did not diminish their support for the value and utility of exchanges and training.

- Some felt that the practical requirements of GPRA-style performance measurement could be too burdensome, given current staffing. Most felt that any extra duties relating to performance measurement would unduly intrude into the main substance of their mission and have a negative effect.
- Ad hoc activities account for a significant portion of all exchanges and training, maybe even a majority. Exactly what percentage is elusive; these activities usually escape aggregate inventory by everyone, including the IAWG. These ad hoc activities present a different kind of performance measurement problem. Because of their transitory nature, they do not readily lend themselves to structured data collection and performance analysis.

Against this backdrop, most interviewees believed that their programs were both worthwhile and effective. Confidence in exchanges is high. This was evidenced in responses that generally indicated that agency representatives were always engaged in unconscious, intuitive, but not formal performance measurement, probably accounting for many of the views encountered by the IAWG study team.

Posts like Bangkok have much to gain by implementing formal performance measurement systems. Much work needs to be done at all levels to develop policies and practical procedures to broaden the acceptance and use of GPRA-mandated performance measurement in the exchanges and training arena. Field officers alone cannot bear the burden of these strategies.

## **Goal V: Host Country Input Into Exchanges and Training Programs**

The degree of cooperation and the legacy of friendly relations between the United States and Thailand undergird and shape the exchange and training activities conducted between the two countries. Most are conducted on a bilateral basis, but a growing number are multilateral. In the course of the IAWG team's visit to Bangkok, it met with an extensive array of program managers. The high degree of host country "partnership" and "buy-in" emerged again and again in interviews as a key factor enhancing the conduct and effectiveness of exchanges and training programs.

The activities conducted by USG agencies in Thailand, whether in the areas of education, health, law enforcement, or defense, are rooted in a strong relationship with the host country. This relationship is marked by a few salient characteristics not usually found in the international educational exchange and training arena.

First, there appeared to be consensus between Thailand and the United States on the priority areas in which the United States engages in exchanges and training activities. No area of activity emerged in the course of the study to which the host country seemed to take exception. There were sectors, however, where Thailand would like the United States to concentrate to a greater degree than at present. Most prominent was the strong appeal made by the Thai Central Intellectual Property and International Trade Court for increased exchanges and training with the United States. Among U.S. activities that



enhanced or benefited the work of the court were appointments with U.S. legal practitioners and professional contacts with members of the U.S. legal profession, including attorneys and faculty of law schools. Such professionals impart to the court what is needed most -- technical assistance in intellectual property rights and information technology case management.

A second hallmark of U.S.-Thai exchanges and training relates to participant recruitment. Very often, the host country chooses the candidates and the U.S. side vets the rosters. There have been some notable exceptions, however. In military training, health, narcotics interdiction, and law enforcement, U.S. program managers felt that the host government *generally* puts forth pools of good recruits. They are in the right professional fields, have the requisite level of English language competence, and can make important contributions when they return. The Embassy personnel stressed the need for vigilant oversight; they are not reticent to refer back unsuitable candidates or those who have had repeated training opportunities. A notable exception to host-country selection was found in the Fulbright Program. Its hallmark is recruitment conducted in an open, merit-based and bilateral context, rooted in legislation and history. Thai and USG officials, academics, representatives of corporations operating in Thailand, and others cooperate in a program that has flourished for over half a century. While Thailand and the United States recruit and screen candidates in their respective countries, they *jointly* vet the full slate of candidates and put forward a consensus package to the J. William Fulbright Board of Foreign Scholarships. Finally, the Public Affairs Officer, in consultation with only U.S. Embassy colleagues, coordinates the dual Visitor Program selection.

Funding and resource allocations are also important roles for any host country in exchanges and training. Thailand's financial crisis has taken a severe toll on its ability to play its former financial role. To its credit, the Thai Government does provide infrastructure support on the ground where it can. For example, Peace Corps teachers are working in the northern provinces, focusing on much needed English language and teacher training. In return, the Thais provide "matching" support, including housing for the Volunteers. In law enforcement, the Thais compete for slots at the FBI National Academy and pay the travel costs of their selected candidates.

Yet a third, less direct, example of host-country participation was provided under the defense-training rubric. Thai military officers who have taken part in IMET training form strong associations with Americans. The U.S. military trainers reported on the benefits of people-to-people contacts through U.S. training, resulting in better networking and free flowing communications that the U.S. military enjoys with the Thai military.

Finally, it was observed that as many as 80 percent of high-level USG contacts throughout the Thai government and beyond had studied in the United States. More than a thousand Thais and several hundred Americans have participated in the Fulbright Program and can be found in the ranks of professionals from every area of Thai society. Indeed, Thai society has sent its future professionals and leaders to American shores for decades. (While the United States remains the country of choice for study, it was noted that other countries, such as Australia and Japan, are competing for Thai students today.)

USG officials across the spectrum of exchange and training activities in Thailand noted almost uniformly that U.S.-educated Thais occupied positions of great influence and importance. They not only helped remove obstacles to quality programming but also acted as advocates for exchanges and training by bringing local resources to bear when possible. Their help is considered invaluable in removing barriers to mobility and nurturing exchange and training programs across the board.

## **Goal VI: Private Sector Initiatives**

As already noted, the severe 1997 economic recession in Thailand has dramatically hindered the government and private sector's ability to support exchanges and training in any significant financial respect. However, the inability to provide financial support does not mean that the private sector is disinterested -- far from it. Many sections of the Embassy in Bangkok enjoy healthy, productive relationships with private sector organizations that are not linked solely to funding. The following are examples:

**Foreign Commercial and Agriculture Services:** The Foreign Commercial Service (FCS), the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS), and the U.S.-Asia Environmental Partnership (USAEP), a Commerce and USAID co-venture, work closely with private sector organizations. The nature of their business lends itself to this type of partnership more so than other sections of the Embassy.

The FCS partnership with the private sector arises in part from the International Buyer Program. Through this program, delegations of Thais are organized to attend trade shows and conferences in the United States, such as COMDEX, a computer and technology trade show, and the International Franchise Exposition. The FCS also arranges meetings between Thai and U.S. entrepreneurs in conjunction with Thai travel to the United States. A desired outcome of these exchanges is Thai procurement of U.S. products or services introduced at a trade show or conference.

The FAS works with a network of 70 trade associations facilitating exchanges of Thai business and government officials with U.S. counterparts. These exchanges encourage both the development of relationships between Thai and U.S. organizations and the adoption of modern U.S. agricultural practices and methods.

Through USAEP, Thai businesses learn about the impact of environmental degradation on the economy. Exchanges and training by U.S. organizations form a partnership between U.S. and Thai companies, which has benefited both countries and their environments. In particular, USAEP sponsored a train-the-trainer seminar by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). With the knowledge the Thais gained, they established their own EPA-certified training school.

One factor noted for providing the most benefit to these programs is cost sharing. Echoing DEA and FAS, the FCS and USAEP foster the notion that unless Thai businesses have a financial investment in training or exchanges, there will be less

commitment to implementing new ideas. The contribution of even a small percentage of the funding for exchanges and training provides a financial incentive to develop new methods and techniques, and to encourage improvements.

**The Kenan Institute Asia (KIA):** The Kenan Institute Asia is an excellent example of a public/private partnership. KIA is a Thai nonprofit foundation with a binational Board of Directors. It supports joint U.S.-Asian activities in economic and social development. It works with government, academia, and the private sector to create private enterprise solutions to public problems.

KIA was created in 1995 when USAID decided to close its mission in Thailand. USAID, the Thai Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation (DTEC), and the Kenan Charitable Trust (a North Carolina-based nonprofit organization) provided endowments to establish KIA.

Since its inception, KIA's goals have been to help improve the Thai economy and to help avert future economic recessions. The primary mechanism for achieving these goals has been through training Thai banks in tighter, more secure financial practices. U.S. accounting firms and financial institutions have been key participants in this endeavor through training courses held in Thailand as well as individual exchanges between financial institutions.

**Private Sector and Law Enforcement:** Law enforcement agencies are hesitant to work too closely with private sector organizations. However, one area in which these two groups come together is training. U.S. law enforcement agencies in Thailand provide a modicum of training to Thai businesses with the hope of better cooperation with agencies when illegal activities arise.

In particular, training is provided in the areas of detecting counterfeit currency, immigration fraud, and smuggling. In each of these areas, private businesses are developing relationships with law enforcement agencies, and individual agents, which lead to a safer, more secure city, country, and world.

## **Goal VII: Addressing Cost Savings**

The impact of the 1997 Thai financial crisis on the current state of affairs colored most reactions about the feasibility of streamlining U.S. funding of international exchanges and training activities. The reaction was that host nation stakeholders want more, not less, training. However, with the 1997 devaluation of the Baht, there has already been a de facto reduction in Thailand's ability to sustain its financial commitment at pre-1997 levels. Exploiting information technology appears to hold the greatest promise to balance the need for cutting costs against minimizing the effect of fewer dollars for exchanges and training.

### ***Savings Through Advanced Distributed Learning/Computer-Assisted Learning/Exploiting Commonplace Technology***

There are many fields, for instance legal and economics training, where location is not that important, and substantial savings could be achieved by doing local training. Where programs are inherently based on a people-to-people immersion setting, any reduction of resources could be detrimental. But technology could advance the impact of such exchanges through pre-departure e-mail and selected, appropriate use of advanced distributed learning.

Foreign Military Sales and International Military Education and Training program participants supported by JUSMAG offer a lot of opportunity to introduce this type of training based strictly on the magnitude of the training load. And JUSMAG supports implementation of advanced distributed learning, but with several cautions. JUSMAG representatives were quick to point out that advanced distributed learning cannot be viewed as a substitute for most IMET activities, where the principal benefit is professionalization afforded via person-to-person contact with U.S. counterparts. JUSMAG members also voiced the view that the state of Thailand's infrastructure mandates that such training be designed with a view toward housing computer hardware and software at a military facility instead of at the student's home. Later, Thailand's National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC) representative's description of the rate of introduction of Internet access to Thailand appeared to ameliorate this concern by suggesting that Internet access is, or soon will be, broadly available. Even so, hook-up costs and the dearth of personal computers mean that centralized locations instead of homes are the terminus for this type of training -- at least for the near term.

DEA stated that the British Customs representative to the United Nations Drug Control Program has an aggressive distance-learning program to deliver various types of training. It is possible that some of this product could be incorporated into other Embassy-supported training.

Separately, some suggested that a web-based program of English language instruction might benefit Embassy-sponsored training initiatives where Thais must learn English as a prerequisite to participating in USG-sponsored training. In addition to computers and existing English language labs, existing technologies could be exploited for education. The deep penetration of television throughout Thailand makes the use of dish satellites a promising vehicle for two types of education delivery: a public education system where English language and other general topics can be pursued [this is already being done to some extent]. Targeted training can also be achieved in this way, as evidenced by the National Technological University (NTU).

### ***Savings Through Partnership***

Partnerships should be sought not only with the private sector, but also with receptive nations that also have a presence in-country. The Peace Corps' solicitation of funds from

third-party embassies for development projects involving Volunteers, counterparts, and other community participants is a prime example. This model could be pursued where other governments see the inherent value in a USG-Thai exchange or training activity and add their own funds, rather than replicate the activity. This is a win/win situation in terms of funding for the United States, Thailand, and third-country governments.

The U.S. Customs office pointed out the commonalities of interests that can be a benefit. For example, the foreign anti-narcotics community is strong and, together with United Nations officials, have jointly discussed best practices and common training approaches. This has a good potential for multiplier effect, reducing duplication, and maximizing collaboration. This type of coordination should extend to every field of exchanges and training.

### ***Savings Through Program Measurement***

There are many valuable exchange and training programs in Thailand. As cited earlier, very little formal performance measurement is taking place at the program implementation level. Greater efficiencies could quickly result if performance measurement techniques were applied to programs across the board, because both Washington program managers and agency field officers would have a more objective view of their programs' inputs, outputs, processes, and results. In this way, if under-performing programs exist, they could be identified, restructured, streamlined, or eliminated.

### **Conclusion**

U.S. Embassy Bangkok is large, complex, energized, and coordinated. A sense of teamwork and cooperation permeates the Mission. This report highlights many aggressive and innovative efforts underway in Thailand and the Southeast Asia region. In particular, exchanges and training are highly valued by the Embassy, recognized as important and useful tools to accomplish Mission goals. They are used widely and are well-administered. Moreover, alumni of these programs are contacted on a regular basis and form an important part of the Embassy's outreach. The country team mechanism is a useful and important way for exchanges and training to mesh with the overall program activities of the Ambassador and his team. The IAWG country study team makes the following final observations and recommendations:

- *Structured examination of Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) on an inter-agency basis.* In every meeting, respondents were asked by the IAWG team to consider that if distributed learning content and infrastructure were available, would it be a feasible way to reduce costs and improve effectiveness associated with various types of country team-sponsored training. Potential areas where this type of technology and learning can be used run the gamut, as described earlier, from training that could help Thailand's intellectual property court to the Peace Corps-sponsored efforts to enhance teacher certification to selected, but broad-

based, JUSMAG-sponsored training for the Thai military. The Department of Defense has an ongoing, robust effort to develop infrastructure, establish standards and policy, and convert much of its existing training to ADL formats so that it can deliver tailored training anywhere, anytime. Input provided to the team was anecdotal but it is clear that widespread opportunities exist to exploit this burgeoning technology in exchange and training programs. The IAWG should consider undertaking a structured approach to explore the pros and cons of widespread application of ADL on an interagency basis. Such an initiative would assist the IAWG in addressing its specific mandates to achieve cost savings -- but not at the expense of content -- to develop/revise coordinated strategies for international training, and to address common issues and challenges faced in conducting international training programs.

- *Host country financial support of exchange and training programs.* Wherever possible, programs should encourage host-country funding and investment. This arrangement has other advantages in addition to decreasing U.S. costs. As was cited in the report, host country investment leads to more effective programs because the host country has a partnership stake.
- *Performance measurement.* As noted earlier, the IAWG should continue to develop information that encourages implementation of GPRA in the arena of international training and exchanges in FY 2001. This encouragement needs to be directed primarily at Washington headquarters so that an unreasonable burden is not placed on already taxed field staff.
- *IAWG data collection review.* Although identified as needing additional work in the 1999 IAWG country studies, efforts to facilitate a transparent view of the totality of USG-sponsored training and exchanges are still hindered by a lack of consensus on the definitions of basic terms.